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MEMORANDUM FOR: ✓ Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

3 March 1955

SUBJECT : Conference with General Twining on Monday, 7 March 1955

25X1A 1. The purpose and background of this meeting have already been explained to General Putt and are set forth in the attached memorandum which General Putt and probably General Twining will have read. It states that the time has come to give some attention to the requirements of the operational phase of AQUATONE, outlines very briefly the nature of the proposed operation and the kind of support required from the Air Force, and concludes with the recommendation that "a single officer be designated who will have responsibility for all of the activities of the Air Force in support of and as a participant in the project." Although this immediate request could be met by naming a staff officer [REDACTED] and giving him the requisite authority to call upon all components of the Air Force, the whole question of the organization of Air Force participation during the operational phase will inevitably be present in General Twining's mind. He will probably indicate his feeling that the responsibility for Air Force activities in support of AQUATONE should be turned over to one of the operational commands, specifically, to SAC.

2. I will be prepared to give a briefing on progress to date and plans for the operation if this seems to be desirable. Specifically, I will have: (a) a map to show possible bases and areas to be covered; (b) information on performance, specifications, and delivery schedules of airframes, engines, and reconnaissance equipment; (c) the status of indigenous pilot recruitment and of arrangements for selection, testing and training; and (d) a rough preliminary outline of an organizational concept.

3. Whether or not we start with a briefing, a logical way to approach the question of Air Force organization and relationship to the project might be to list the contributions we believe the Air Force will have to make. The more important are: (a) continued help in the whole development and procurement process in the form of judgment, services of many kinds, and equipment; (b) help in the selection, testing, and training of pilots; (c) the services of a number of competent officers (say 10 to 20) to help in the actual conduct of operations; (d) the use of certain Air Force facilities abroad and cover at those bases; and (e) support during the operational phase in many forms including transportation, intelligence, weather information, and housekeeping.

4. When the actual question arises of the designation of a project officer to be in charge of Air Force participation or of the assignment of responsibility to an operational command, the following is the general line it would seem to me appropriate for you to take:

a. It is, of course, none of CIA's business how the Air Force organizes its activities but the character of the project imposes certain requirements which have a bearing on organization.

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b. This project has been conceived as a clandestine, intelligence gathering operation in which missions will be flown only by non-military [REDACTED] pilots, and the initial policy decision to proceed was made on this basis. In order to conform to this concept it would seem desirable to avoid arrangements of such a character that the project could be described as a military operation conducted by the offensive air arm of the regular military establishment.

c. There is a vital necessity for security. This requirement would seem to have two implications for organization. First, knowledge of the project must be limited to the narrowest possible circle of those who need to know, a category which should include only those individuals who are actually working on some aspect of it and a very few top policymakers. The circle would be widened dangerously if all the individuals in a long chain of command, and especially staff elements at three or four levels, had to be included. Second, it is desirable for the project to be so organized that it is given the best possible cover. This purpose would be served by locating the responsibility for Air Force participation administratively somewhere other than in the obvious place where such activities might be expected to center if this were a strictly military project.

d. Not only should the project have as little military aura as possible and be rigorously secure, it must also be subject to close and continuous policy control by the senior policymakers of this Government. The activities here involved are of so highly sensitive a character that no large delegation of authority is likely to be made. Such control is going to be very much easier to maintain if the project headquarters is in Washington.

e. Primarily to maintain security but also to ensure close control, it is probably not going to be possible to use established command channels in either the CIA or the Air Force. In any large and complex organization orders and communications normally pass through many hands and must be coordinated with many elements. Efficiency in such an organization requires a degree of delegation (for instance to theater commanders) which is not feasible in this case. Accordingly, whatever the focus of responsibility within the Air Force, it will probably continue to be necessary to use special channels and to involve only a few selected individuals within each organizational unit in project activities.

f. To summarize: The character of the project would seem to require that the officer immediately in charge of Air Force participation be stationed in Washington, that he have authority to deal directly with the CIA and with other components of the Air Force on project business, that if he is in an operational command his connection with it be played down so as to avoid identification of the project with it, and that there be a direct channel from the Washington project headquarters to overseas units.

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5. Whatever the drift of the discussion it is most important to emphasize that the cooperation we have been and are receiving from the Air Force simply could not have been more complete or more effective. In no sense does the raising of these organizational questions at this time imply either dissatisfaction or a feeling that things which need to be done are not getting done. It simply grows out of a desire to be prepared for the next phase of the operation. In making this point I suggest that you mention [REDACTED] by name. If you feel it is appropriate, you might contrive to suggest that he would be in our eyes an admirable project officer.

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